

Fact Sheet

Arizona High School Survey

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) in collaboration with the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) is conducting a spring Student Health Survey. There will be two versions: the Youth Tobacco Survey and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Selected classes will be randomly assigned to take one of the two versions. No student will complete more than one questionnaire. The following are answers to some of the more frequently asked questions about these surveys.

Q. What is the focus of the Arizona Student Health Survey?

- A. All questions on the YTS relate to student's attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge about tobacco use, intent to use, exposure to tobacco use, and exposure to tobacco marketing/advertising. The YRBS focuses on priority health risk behaviors established during adolescence that result in most significant mortality and morbidity during both youth and adulthood. These include behaviors that result in unintentional injuries and violence; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behaviors; unhealthy dietary behaviors; and physical inactivity.

Q. Is the survey mandated?

- A. Yes. Any school or school district receiving state and/or federal grant funds is required to cooperate in all evaluations conducted by the Arizona Department of Education including the Arizona Student Health Survey. Moreover, the YRBS serves as the source of data for several of the ADE's performance measures in ADE's No Child Left Behind Consolidated Plan to the U.S. Department of Education.

Q. Will student participation be anonymous? Will student privacy be protected?

- A. Yes. Survey administration procedures have been designed to protect student privacy and allow for anonymous participation. Students will not put their names or other identifying information on the questionnaires or answer sheets.

Q. How many schools in Arizona will participate in the surveys?

- A. Ninety-four Arizona schools containing one or more classes of grades 9 through 12 (mostly high schools) have been randomly selected to participate in the Arizona Student Health Survey.

Q. How many students are selected from each school?

- A. Sample sizes vary by school. Approximately four to six classes per school (about 100 to 150 students) will be randomly selected as part of intact classrooms to participate in the survey.

Q. How long will it take to fill out the survey?

- A. Only one 45-minute class period is needed for completing the multiple-choice, paper-and-pencil survey.

Q. What organizations have pledged their support of the survey?

- A. The Arizona Student Health Survey is supported by many state and national health and education organizations, such as the Arizona Adolescent Health Coalition, the Arizona Charter Schools Association, the Arizona School Boards Association, the Arizona PTA, Healthy Arizona 2010 Advisory Board, the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, the Phoenix Children's Hospital, and the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center. Several local health departments have pledged their support including Apache, Coconino, Maricopa, Mohave, and Pima counties. Nationally, the YTS and the YRBS are supported by the American Association of School Administrators, the American Cancer Society, the American Dietetic Association, the American School Health Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Education Association, the National PTA, and the National School Boards Association.

Q. How are the data collected? By whom?

- A. Data are collected by specially trained field staff. The field staff provide students with all necessary materials to complete the survey including questionnaires, answer sheets, and pencils.

Q. How is the Arizona Student Health Survey coordinated at each school?

- A. It is preferable to have a single spokesperson in each school. This can be the principal, another administrator, a teacher, or someone else designated by the principal. The spokesperson works directly with ORC Macro to provide them with a list of class sections, distribute parental permission forms to teachers of the sampled classes, help to promote the survey in the school, and ensure a high participation rate.

Q. What is done to maximize student participation?

- A. Information is provided to school administrators explaining the importance of the survey that can be shared with teachers, parents, and students. It is helpful if the school's spokesperson is familiar with the surveys and is willing to seek support from teachers, parents, and students. The school spokesperson may work through the school's PTA to gain support for the survey.

Q. Do students answer questions truthfully?

- A. Research indicates data of this nature may be gathered as reliably from adolescents as from adults. Internal reliability checks help identify the small percentage of students who falsify their answers. To obtain truthful answers, students must perceive the survey as important and know procedures have been developed to protect their privacy and allow for anonymous participation.

Q. When is the survey conducted? When are results available?

A. Data collection occurs during February through April. All participating school districts and schools receive a copy of the results.

Q. How will survey results be used?

A. The Arizona Department of Education, the Arizona Department of Health Services along with local education and health agencies, will use the results to develop education programs, related services, and other strategies to help reduce health risk behaviors and improve academic performance. Results also can be used by districts and schools when applying for grants.

Q. What do the schools receive for participating in the survey?

A. Schools and school districts will receive a copy of the published report on survey results.

Q. Who is the survey contractor?

A. ORC Macro, a nationally recognized survey research company, has received a contract from the Arizona Department of Education to work to administer the Arizona Student Health Survey.

Q. Where can additional information be obtained?

A. To arrange to conduct data collection in your school, please contact Kate Flint, toll-free at 1-877-342-6987 between 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Mountain Time or at Katherine.H.Flint@orcmacro.com. For questions directed to the ADE, please contact Denise Muller of ADE's Student Services Division at 602-364-0309 or at dmuller@mail1.ade.state.az.us.